



# Betty T. Yee, Chairwoman State Board of Equalization

Serving the 8.5 million Californians of the First Equalization District, comprised of 21 counties along the northern and central California coast, including the entire San Francisco Bay Area



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## Quarterly e-Newsletter

To learn more about services provided by the State Board of Equalization, please call my office or visit my website at [www.boe.ca.gov/members/yee](http://www.boe.ca.gov/members/yee)

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I am pleased to share the first of my quarterly e-newsletters to keep you apprised of my work and activities on the Board of Equalization and in the First Equalization District.

Californians deserve to be treated fairly by their government, and in this regard, I take my responsibility very seriously to provide a fair, open, and accessible forum for taxpayers to appeal their liabilities. I am committed to fair, consistent, and correct application of the state's tax laws to ensure the protection of our tax dollars that support vital public services, such as education, health care, natural resources and environmental protection, public safety, and transportation.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.

Sincerely,

BETTY T. YEE  
Chairwoman

## Yee Sworn In as First District Member

Before a capacity audience of 250, Acting Board Member Betty Yee took the oath of office on January 4, 2007, to assume the duties of Board Member after being elected to the office in November 2006. The oath of office was administered by the Honorable Peter Siggins, Associate Justice of the California Courts of Appeal, before family, friends, colleagues, and community leaders.



## Interim Chairwoman Yee Continues at the Helm: Committed to Customer Service

At its January 31, 2007 meeting, the Board unanimously voted to name Yee as Chair of the publicly elected tax board. In this capacity, she will provide strategic guidance and direction to the agency's executive staff, preside over the monthly Board meetings in Sacramento as well as three southern California Board meetings annually to hear and decide taxpayer appeals and act on regulatory matters, and serve as a voting member of the Franchise Tax Board.

Yee played a major role in the formulation of the Board of Equalization's (BOE's) 2007-2011 Strategic Plan, which will guide the agency staff over the next five years in better fulfilling its mission to serve the public through fair, effective, and efficient tax administration. "It is critical that the BOE continually examine ways to enhance service delivery by utilizing our human talent and technology more wisely for maximum customer service and greater efficiency."

The BOE's 2007-2011 Strategic Plan is available on the BOE's website at [www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov).

## Taxpayer Services Extended in Eureka

On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Chairwoman Yee and Senator Patricia Wiggins announced an agreement allowing the Board of Equalization (BOE) to continue personally assisting taxpayers in the Eureka region. Facing budget constraints, the BOE was forced to close a Eureka location in 2005. Former Senator Wesley Chesbro made a similar arrangement with the BOE to serve the Eureka region. He was succeeded by Senator Wiggins in December 2006.

"We're working to maintain a supportive presence in Eureka that gives North Coast businesses a little extra help during filing season," said Yee. Taxpayers will be able to visit Senator Wiggins' office several days a month to find help from BOE staff with sales and use tax returns, permit applications, and payments.

Senator Wiggins' office is located at 710 E Street, Suite 150 in Eureka. A complete list of service dates and hours can be found by visiting the BOE's website at [www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov) or by calling the BOE toll-free at 1-800-400-7115.

## Yee Announces First Broadcast of Board Meeting

Chairwoman Yee is pleased to announce that the February 27<sup>th</sup> Board meeting was the first to include a live audio broadcast over the Internet. "This move allows us to serve a broader audience throughout the state and provides greater transparency of this publicly-elected board," notes Yee.

Links to the audio can be accessed through the Board's website:  
[www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov)

The Board is also working to make audio recordings available online soon.



## Legal Aid Available for Bay Area Taxpayers

Through a partnership with San Francisco's Golden Gate University School of Law under the BOE's Tax Appeals Assistance Program, law students will offer free legal assistance to Bay Area taxpayers with appeals being considered by the Board. "We're giving law students a chance to test their mettle, practice their adjudicatory skills, and contribute in a very real way," said Yee, who holds a Master of Public Administration degree from Golden Gate University.

The five-member Board hears appeals for a variety of state taxes and fees. Appellants may represent themselves or hire counsel, but the added costs of legal representation can be an additional burden for some taxpayers. The law students will handle appeals involving Homeowner and Renter Property Tax Assistance claims, head of household filing status, state assessments following federal actions, statute of limitations, and relief of interest and penalties. As the program grows, students' caseloads may extend to other types of individual and business tax cases.

Golden Gate University School of Law joins three other law schools that are participating in the Tax Appeals Assistance Program: Chapman University's School of Law in Orange; the University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento; and Loyola University School of Law in Los Angeles. Visit the BOE website at [www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov) for more information about the Tax

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**GOLDEN GATE UNIVERSITY**

## Reminder: Californians Must Report Internet Purchases



With the tax filing season winding down, Chairwoman Yee reminds California consumers to report and pay use tax on Internet and out-of-state purchases. Sales tax applies to most in-state purchases, but the "use tax" generally applies to sales made outside the state or online when sales tax is not applied. Individuals can report and pay use tax on their California income tax returns, which are due on April 17<sup>th</sup> this year.

"It's a new concept to many," said Chairwoman Yee, "that you owe California tax on something you shipped across the country. But everyone should understand how it affects their taxes, and tax preparers should discuss use tax liabilities with their clients."

The use tax was established in 1935 to protect California retailers from untaxed out-of-state or mail-order competition. Today, most of that competition is in the form of out-of-state Internet sales. Over \$1 billion in use tax from Internet sales to California consumers goes unreported each year.

## Taxpayer Education for Our Ethnic Communities

In furtherance of her 2006 pilot initiative, Chairwoman Yee kicked off the 2007 series of free in-language Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminars in the First Equalization District offices. Recognizing that small business owners continue to emerge from our ethnic communities, Yee worked with District Office administrators and staff to establish the in-language seminars for existing and prospective business owners to be offered in Spanish, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Thank you to Ping Bui, Connie Chang, Johnny Hui and Jim Banh who facilitated the Chinese seminar in the San Jose District Office on March 6<sup>th</sup> and in the Oakland District Office on March 29<sup>th</sup>; and to Catherine Sorg and Rosio Watteyne, who facilitated the Spanish seminar in the Santa Rosa District Office on March 15<sup>th</sup>. "Our District Office staff are committed to helping business owners understand their sales and use tax requirements to ensure compliance," notes Yee. "The BOE is very fortunate to have such a talented, committed corps of Spanish-, Chinese-, and Vietnamese-speaking employees willing to work with their respective communities."

## Non-Profit Community a Strong Presence in the Davis Region

Chairwoman Yee, in co-sponsorship with State Senator Mike Machado and State Assemblymember Lois Wolk, convened the first 2007 free tax seminar for non-profit and exempt organizations on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Davis Musical Theater Company's Hoblit Performing Arts Center in Davis. Over 200 individuals attended the seminar representing non-profit and exempt organizations in Yolo, Solano, and Sacramento counties that are involved in educational, health, social services, environmental, religious, animal shelter programs. "I applaud the commitment and dedication of our non-profit community in serving the needs of those that government programs oftentimes are unable to reach," says Yee. "They are critical component of each community's service provider network."

To assist non-profit and exempt organizations in understanding their state and federal tax requirements, the seminar included the participation of representatives from the BOE, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Franchise Tax Board, the Employment Development Department, the Attorney General's Office, and the Alliance for Justice.

## Ushering in the Year of the Boar

"Gung Hay Fat Choy!" Chairwoman Yee shouted to the 500,000-strong crowd in San Francisco on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, as she led the procession of elected officials in the 2007 Chinese New Year Parade ushering in the Year of the Boar. "The Chinese New Year is a time for new beginnings, and it is so exciting to share the festivities and the rich traditions with so many who came out on such a warm San Francisco evening." The parade was capped by a 200-foot dragon winding its way along Market Street, through Union Square, into Chinatown.



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Persons born in Boar years are thought to be honest and make good friends; rarely lose their temper; love the good things in life and are willing to share them with others; enjoy gossip; fall in love easily; but can be untidy at home.

## Upcoming Calendar

Mark your calendars for the following events that will occur in the First Equalization District next quarter. All events are free. For specific locations of these events, visit [www.boe.ca.gov](http://www.boe.ca.gov), or call Chairwoman Yee's office at (415) 557-3000.

### **April 2007**

- 3 Youth and Young Adult Financial Skills Workshop (San Francisco)
- 5 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (San Francisco)
- 17 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (Oakland)
- 19 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in Spanish (San Jose)  
Tax Return Preparation Class in Spanish (San Jose)
- 25 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (Santa Rosa)

### **May 2007**

- 3 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (San Francisco)
- 10 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in Vietnamese (San Jose)  
Tax Return Preparation Class in Vietnamese (San Jose)  
Basic Sales and Use Tax Class in Spanish (Salinas)  
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- 15 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (Oakland)
- 16 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (San Jose)  
Tax Return Preparation Class in English (San Jose)  
Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in Chinese (San Francisco Chinatown)

### **June 2007**

- 7 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in Spanish (San Francisco)
- 19 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (Oakland)
- 21 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (San Jose)  
Tax Return Preparation Class in English (San Jose)
- 28 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in Spanish (Oakland)

### **July 2007**

- 11 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in Spanish (San Jose)  
Tax Return Preparation Class in Spanish (San Jose)  
Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (Vacaville Chamber of Commerce)
- 12 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (San Francisco)
- 17 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (Oakland)
- 24 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in Spanish (Santa Rosa)
- 25 Basic Sales and Use Tax Seminar in English (Santa Rosa)

